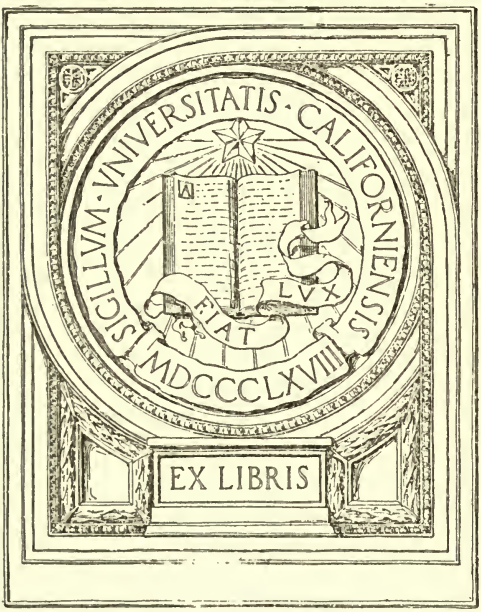
UC-NRLF
$B 29 867

GIFT OF



9551
E633

ILYA OF MUROM

THE EIGHTEENTH GROVE PLAY OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB

1920

Charles Caldwell Dobie

November 18/1920 —

ILYA OF MUROM

BY

CHARLES CALDWELL DOBIE

MUSIC BY

ULDERICO MARCELLI

THE EIGHTEENTH GROVE PLAY OF THE
BOHEMIAN CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO

AS PERFORMED BY ITS MEMBERS IN THE BOHEMIAN GROVE
SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, ON THE TWENTY-
FOURTH NIGHT OF JULY, NINETEEN
HUNDRED AND TWENTY

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO
BOHEMIAN CLUB
1920

COPYRIGHT 1920
BY BOHEMIAN CLUB
SAN FRANCISCO

PRINTED BY BRUCE BROUGH
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

FOREWORD

The material for the following Grove Play was gleaned from the legends of Little Russia, known as the Kiev cycle. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that many liberties have been taken with the original tales in order to weld them into a dramatic whole.

Many of the lyrics have followed in form and spirit, as nearly as possible, old Russian folk songs and dances, while others, obviously, are modeled along more conventional lines.

The author craves the indulgence of all who have the good fortune to have the technique of poetry at their command. Failing such knowledge, and fearing the heaviness of pages of florid prose, he has availed himself of the new poetic license and broken up the dialogue into very free verse.

431972

D

NOBLES

C. C. Broadwater
W. C. Hays
W. F. Leib
L. W. Mace
G. Hammersmith
John R. Selby

SOLDIERS

W. H. French
Andrew F. Mahony
Preston McKinney
R. D. Merrill
R. L. Shurtleff
George B. Stacy

FRUIT BEARERS

Charles K. Field
Russell B. Field
Burt F. Lum
George C. Leib

STAGE DIRECTOR	Reginald Travers
LIGHTING	Edward J. Duffey assisted by Vincent Duffey
FLIGHT	Wm. H. Smith
DIRECTORS OF DANCE	Ted Shawn assisted by George Hammersmith
PROPERTIES	Harry P. Carlton and Harry S. Fonda
CHORUS MASTER	Eugene Blanchard
CONDUCTOR	Ulderico Marcelli
CONCERT MASTER	T. H. Jensen
ORCHESTRA MANAGER	Walter Oesterricher

Place: *Forest Glades near Kiev*
Time: *The Middle Ages*

PLAN OF MUSIC

ACT I

Prelude
Lament of Ilya
Hymn of Peasants
Dance and Song of Peasants
Wayfarers' Chorus
Miracle Music
Finale

ACT II

Interlude
Entrance of Nightingale
Theme of Ilya
Theme of Zlatigorka
Dance of the Bird-Demons
Wayfarers' Chorus

ACT III

Opening Chorus of Peasants
March of the Nobles
Entrance of Falcon
Fight between Ilya and Falcon
Funeral March
Hymn of Peasants
Wayfarers' Chorus
Finale

NIGHTINGALE, *the Robber*

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

ILYA OF MUROM

A FOLK-TALE DRAMA

ACT I

A FOREST GLADE IN HOLY RUSSIA

Before the curtain is raised the lament of ILYA *is heard.*

ILYA (*singing*)

'Tis not the breeze sighing so long and vainly,
Nor yet the sky drenching thy hair with dew;
No, 'tis thy poor Ilya, seeking God's blessing,
Plead for me, little mother, plead for thy helpless son!

'Tis not the fluttering of a wounded nestling,
Nor yet the twig snapping before the axe;
Nay, 'tis my poor heart breaking in twain,
Plead for me, little mother, plead for thy helpless son!

[*At the conclusion of the lament, the curtain rises.* ILYA *is discovered upon a rude couch of straw and boughs. A rustic table is at his side with a jug of water and a few homely household utensils upon it. Off stage comes the sound of song and snatches of laughter and the ringing note of axes.* ILYA *raises himself upon his elbow and listens, struggles as if to rise, and, lifting his hands toward Heaven in supplication, falls back sobbing.* MARYA *enters. She catches the sound of* ILYA'S *grief and rushes toward him, dropping to her knees and lifting him up.*

THE VIRGIL
ANTHOLOGY

ILYA

Good mother, let me but dry these bitter tears
Upon the soft patience of thy smile
And I shall be as blue-skyed as a noon-day hour
After the dripping anger of April has spent itself.
For thou, of all my kin, know best the burden of my grieving,
Thou who hast borne me to this sad life of dreadful ease,
Condemned to eat my bread in idleness.
Here must I lie, forever gazing at the dancing tree-tops
Which alone my fancy scales.
Here must I lie, forever listening to the woodman's greedy
axe
Ravishing the fair, green bodies of the forest.
Here must I lie, chained like yon silvering brook
When the white curse of north winds is upon it.
But see thee now, the Spring has long since
Melted flint-hearted Winter to garrulous pity;
And, in a summer truce, the impotent stream of bleak
December
Laughs on its rippling way, like pigeons to their homing.
Tell me, kind mother, canst thou not give me words
So fiery and burning that I may pour them out in hot
entreaty
Upon the heart of God until His anger soften?
Or shall I woo the gentle Christ with sweeter supplications?
Surely, He who released the brook from ice-bound servitude
Can set the warm blood tingling in these limbs of mine
Withered in an untimely womb.
Come gentle soul, let us together plead,
Perhaps our stream of mingled prayers may overflood the
wall
Reared by the sins of an unworthy generation
That, long agone, hath spawned
Both us and God's displeasure!

[ILYA *lifts his hands palm-upward toward heaven, his mother kneels before him with fingers clasped in prayer. The peasants enter in boisterous groups. Some carry axes, some wooden rakes, some sickles, and other evidences of harvest-time. As each group draws near* ILYA *and his mother they discover the prayerful attitude of the two and instinctively drop to their knees. As the last peasant assumes this attitude of reverence, certain of the company break into song.*

SONG OF THE PEASANTS

Here in the golden hush of noon,
  Straight falls the ever-speeding sun;
Thus, Lord, let down Thy gracious boon,
  On each and every sinful one.

Give us this day our daily bread,
  And bless the fruitage of the field;
Extend the forest's leafy spread,
  Increase the stream-side's leaping yield.

Clothe us in faith as sweetly green,
  As thou hast clothed these fragrant trees;
Lead now our steps in paths serene,
  And grant all sorrow quick surcease.

Revive our hopes, destroy our fears,
  Bind up the crimson wounds of sin;
Soften our pride with chastening tears,
  That thy fair peace may enter in.

Make whole the sick, restore the blind,
Turn not from this thy servant's cry;
Sweet Christ, whose heart is ever kind,
Pass not the humblest of us by.

ILYA (*extending his arms toward the peasants in thankful benediction*)

Sweet friends, how can I find fair words
To thank you for your supplications?
Surely, if what they say is true,
This day the throne of Heaven, wearied by our petitions,
Will, even as the unjust judge, grant us our prayers,
And make us whole again in body and in spirit.

[*The company rise slowly and begin to spread a rude feast upon the grass.*

IVAN (*advancing toward* ILYA)

My son, see what today came to my hand
As merrily I wrought my reaping:
A lark's nest in the grassy thicket
Filled to the brim with wide-mouthed life!
Straightway I thought of thee,
And carried it thus tenderly in my bosom
For thy delight.

ILYA

Ah, 'tis a goodly omen!
Let me but hold it here close to this coverlet,
So to keep warm its precious burden.
And, when thou goest again to thy gay reaping,
Take it and lay it gently where the sorrowing mother
Broods songless at her loss.
For I, least of all men, can spare the care-free carolings
Of these, our feathered friends.

FIRST PEASANT

And I, this woodland flower of wondrous blue, did pluck,
Take it and wear it next thy heart!

ILYA

Not so! My heart is sinful, and hot with a revolt
That, in a twinkling, would sear so frail a bloom.
Rather let it be sprinkled with reviving dew
And kept beneath my gaze.
Flowers were sent us for our cherishing.
[*He hands the flower to* MARYA.

SECOND PEASANT

I set a snare among the thorny bushes of the hills
For swift-winged doves. But, in their place this morn,
Found I this timorous mouse strayed from low-lying plains.
Perhaps its nimble presence will help more speedily
To pass the sullen hours.

ILYA

Give it here!
Poor little frightened thing, think you that couch-tied ILYA
Will find his pleasure in a sorely-caged companion?
Nay, trembling creature of the fields, take freedom
From my hand and go in peace!
[*He frees the mouse. The peasants look downcast.*

FIRST PEASANT

How! have our gifts so little pleased you?

ILYA

Freely made gifts must be as freely spent
If we would find them sweet.
Look not so sad because my fancy plays the spendthrift.
Give us a tune, good comrades, and let your dancing feet
Tell me that I am rich in your forgiveness!

IVAN

The lad says truly.

FIRST PEASANT

Come, some music! We who have feet for dancing
Can scarce deny the gentle favor asked by Ilya
Our heaven-cursed companion!

[*A lively bustle ensues. Some throw themselves upon the grass and eat, others lift drinking jugs to their lips. Music is played. A group of peasants dance furiously, after the manner of Little Russia, with brave shouts and laughter.*

PEASANTS (*singing*)

When the axe is full of flashing laughter,
  Then the woodland trembles at its mirth;
When the axe is full of flashing laughter,
  Quickly fall the sobbing trees to earth.

Watch the sickle like a moon of silver,
  Moving in the truant sunlight's glow;
Watch the sickle like a moon of silver,
  Swiftly lay the trembling grasses low.

See the little sun-burnt leaflets whirling,
  Bitter is the wind and dark their flight;
See the little sun-burnt leaflets whirling,
  Like the souls of children in their flight.

Now, my lady's feet are on the greensward,
  Red-tipped are her boots and laced with blue;
Now my lady's feet are on the greensward,
  Tell me, is my dancing sweetheart true.

When my Masha smiles at me with lips so gay,
Then my feet go dancing all the live-long day.
Ai, liuli, liuli, liuli,
Then my feet go dancing all the live-long day!

ILYA

Well done! But to watch your sunlit whirlings
Sets my dull pulses leaping,
And stirs my heart to a vain hope!

SECOND PEASANT (*glancing upward*)

The hour of noon is swiftly waning.
If we would spend a lusty day to the sun's red setting
We had best claim our noon-day drowse.

[*The peasants respond with nods of approval. They begin to yawn and stretch.*

IVAN

Ilya, lad, keep thy sharp eye aloft,
And when the sun is at its proper slanting,
Call us that we may be, in perfect season,
To our appointed tasks.

ILYA

Aye, father. I'll let no single sunbeam fall unmeasured.

[*One by one the peasants fall asleep until the only wakeful one is* ILYA.

ILYA

See, now, how graciously they sleep,
Rocked in the rude-hung cradle of toil.
Would that I might one day drink as deep of the oblivion,
Which comes so swift upon the heels of labor.
But I must be content to lie,

Wide-eyed and pricked with bitter longings,
Gazing at the clear blue of Heaven,
That, had I but the wings, would seem
No further than a swallow's flight!

[*He falls back and lies with arms outstretched, gazing up at the sky. The sound of faint singing is heard coming nearer and nearer. Finally, the figures of three holy wayfarers are seen slowly descending the long trail.*

Song of the Wayfarers

Over the hills and the plains,
Over the streams and the sea,
Come we tearfully,
Come we fearfully,
Foot-sore and wearily.

In the hot sunlight of noon,
In the cold bleakness of night,
With scarce a heeding,
With scarce a needing,
Save for Our Lord's delight.

Past the gray castles of ease,
Past the sad huts of the poor,
Unmindful of sorrow,
Unmindful of morrow,
Christ-like do we endure.

By the still waters of peace,
By the loud surges of strife,
God's love adoring,
God's love imploring,
Seek we the perfect life.

He who revives us with drink,
He who sustains us with bread,
Lightens a dreary road,
Lightens a sinful load,
Blessings be on his head!

Over the hills and the plains,
Over the streams and the sea,
Come we tearfully,
Come we fearfully,
Foot-sore and wearily.

[*At first* ILYA *remains inactive, but, as the strains come nearer he rouses himself, watching in silent curiosity the wayfarers as they make their way toward the center of the stage.*

FIRST WAYFARER

Quickly . . . some water . . . I faint!

SECOND WAYFARER

Courage, brother!
My senses tell me that we have drawn near a humble habitation.
The poor are ever gracious and pitiful.

THIRD WAYFARER (*turning about and catching sight of* ILYA)

How now, lad? Must thou lie thus in swaddled ease,
While poor, spent pilgrims swoon before thy slumbering threshold?
Some water! In all haste and charity come quickly,
Lest we die!

ILYA (*pointing to the jug upon the table*)

Gentle and holy men, drink ye your fill!
Yon jug is moist to overflowing.

THIRD WAYFARER

Bring it to us, thou slothful and unmannerly youth!
Canst thou not see that we are all three
Wearied and foot-sore almost to our death?

ILYA

Pitiful strangers, how canst thou think so ill of this thy helpless servant?
Gladly would I run tripping to thy call, had not just God Himself,
Set the dull curse of withered limbs upon me.

THIRD WAYFARER (*lifting his right arm aloft*)

Ilya, son of Ivan, rise and give us drink!

ILYA (*struggling painfully*)

Holy Brothers, I cannot!

SECOND WAYFARER

Ilya, son of Ivan, rise and give us drink!

ILYA (*struggling and raising himself a trifle*)

Sweet friends in Christ, thou doth almost persuade me.

FIRST WAYFARER

Ilya, son of Ivan, rise and give us drink!

ILYA (*throwing himself with a mighty effort from his couch and standing suddenly erect*)

Pitiful Heaven, do I but dream?
Or do my feet at last touch the moist Mother Earth?
Wake me not, I pray thee, if my senses have so sweetly wandered,
But let me rather flee the body thus in trembling joy!

THIRD WAYFARER

How now? . . . Hast thou so soon forgotten?
Water! Art thou still unmindful of our need?

[ILYA *gazes at the wayfarers in silent wonderment, then very slowly and cautiously he moves toward the table. Lifting the jug he pours a draught into an earthern cup and, carrying it between his palms, he walks over to the wayfarers. He falls on his knees, offering them the cup. They each in their turn receive it.*

FIRST WAYFARER

Drink ye also, Ilya, son of weakness!

[ILYA *receives the cup and drinks.*

SECOND WAYFARER

Ilya, son of sudden hope, how is it now with thy strength?

ILYA (*stretching and opening his arms with newfound power*)

I thank thee with reverence, venerable fathers,
My strength is now such as could surely move the earth!

THIRD WAYFARER

Give us to drink once more.

[ILYA *hands them the cup.*

First Wayfarer

Drink again in thy turn, Ilya, son of great power!

[Ilya *drinks.*

Third Wayfarer

Ilya, son of holy might, how is it now with thy strength?

Ilya

I thank thee gratefully, pious brothers,
My strength is only half as wondrous as before.

First Wayfarer

'Tis well!
If it were greater then this moist Mother Earth
Being too frail, would bend beneath thy weight!

[Ilya *leaps to his feet with sudden ecstacy, and, seizing an axe, begins to strike right and left at some saplings bringing them down with a crash.*

Ilya

Father . . . mother . . . comrades!
Awake! Awake! *Awake!*
Throw off your heavy slumber,
And see what miracle has by these holy men,
In God's sweet name, been wrought!

[*The peasants start up in great confusion.* Ilya, *swinging his axe aloft, brings it crashing down into a stump.*

Ivan

The good Lord save my senses! Have I gone suddenly mad?
Or is this, then, indeed my ill-begotten son,
Who, but an hour agone, lay like a wingless fledgling
Deserted by the flying brood?

Come, little mother, tell me, is thy sight also
Tricked into vain imaginings?

[MARYA, *shrinking into* IVAN'S *encircling arm, nods her answer. The two, in wonderment, draw near their son, feeling his arms, his face, his hair. The peasants do likewise.*

FIRST PEASANT (*seeking to dislodge the axe that* ILYA *left in the stump*)

Saint Basil and all his followers preserve us!
This strong-armed son of fury has lodged the axe
Past all hope of recovery!

[IVAN *and the* SECOND PEASANT *try their hands at the axe also, without avail.* ILYA, *throwing his head back with a smile, pushes the peasants aside and draws the axe from the stump.*

IVAN (*lifting his eyes toward heaven*)

Now, then, gracious Father, give ear to the poor thanks
Falling thus humbly from the lips of thy unworthy servant.
For this, my son, who was in bondage held, is freed again!
For this, my son, who was laid low, is raised aloft!

[IVAN *steps forward, enfolds* ILYA *in his arms, and kisses him upon either cheek.* MARYA *follows.*

ILYA

Look not so sad, good comrades! This is a time for laughter!
See how I leap and click my anxious heels together.
Do we lack music or has my sudden fortune
Forever stilled your dancing feet?

[*At this hint the music starts up the same merry tune that was played when the peasants danced for* ILYA'S *delight. At its sound the peasants form a*

circle about ILYA *and swing into a spirited measure as he stands in the center capering to the music.* IVAN, *urged in pantomime by the anxious mother, breaks through the circle and drags the reluctant* ILYA *aside.*

IVAN

Softly, my lusty son! Thy mother
Is not yet fully won to thy swift-winged recovery.
Stands she aside with anxious heart,
Counselling a greater prudence.
There will be time enough for mirth and dancing
After the burden of both field and forest
Hath by thy might been tested.

ILYA (*standing between his father and mother with an arm encircling each*)

Good sire and patient mother, forgive my foolish joy!
Hadst thou but known the sweet taste of deliverance,
Thy fond indulgence would bear with me.
But thou sayest truly, too long have I been fed by pitiful bounty.
The sun is slanting to its slow-measured wane;
Give me yon axe and let me try my fortune
Side by side with these fair friends,
Who have, in days gone by, helped me
With song and dance and jest
To pass the loathsome hours.
Or if the reaping of the meadow suits best thy purpose,
Put in my hand a shining sickle,
And I shall prove my worth, and so requite thee all.

[*During this speech the wayfarers who have stood silent and forgotten begin to recover interest in the proceedings. At the conclusion of* ILYA'S

words they push their way toward the center of the stage, with their right arms uplifted.

THIRD WAYFARER

Ilya, son of Ivan, spend not thy strength upon the forest
Nor put the might of thy right arm to either plow or scythe.

SECOND WAYFARER

But set thee out this day upon the business of thy Father who is in Heaven,
For He hath graciously raised thee up to be a light shining in the darkness.
For he hath redeemed thee from weakness to be a sure defense for them that are beset.

FIRST WAYFARER

Gird up thy loins and get thee speedily to the Holy City,
And, in its gilded Sanctuary, offer thyself up a stainless sacrifice,
That God may consecrate thee in graciousness to snow-white deeds
Fit to release the world from its sad thrall.
Tarry not an instant on thy way.
For the road is long and the journey filled with weariness,
And there is none save thee strengthened for the task.
Keep thy heart clean and trust not to the wiles of women;
For in the kisses of their mouths is destruction,
And from their couches rise tribulation and sorrow.
Do but keep this commandment and thou shalt be confounded by nothing:
Neither by the hordes of infidels upon the plains
Nor the companies of robbers that lie in wait upon the hill-tops.

The foaming river bordering the Black Morass shall not affright thee,
Nor shall the bird-demons of the forest find aught in thee but might for their destruction.
But take you good heed of Nightingale, the Robber,
Whose nest is raised among the seven highest tree-tops
And whose sons and daughters sharpen their talons
Wherewith to pluck out the eyes of them that God hath favored.
Through thee shall all fear be laid low; and by thy strength shall all sorrow and strife be ended.
Keep thou but in the path of righteousness and speedily will joy and fellow-ship be brought to fruit.
But fail thee in purity but one hair's-breadth
And who shall say how long the Lord, in His just anger,
Will keep thy weak feet wandering in the soft paths of sin,
Until his heart be melted.
Ilya, son of Ivan, farewell!
Take neither scrip nor cloak nor loaves upon thy journey,
But wear this golden cross ever about thy neck,
And all things shall be added to thy store.

[*The* First Wayfarer *slips the golden cross from his shoulders and places it about* Ilya's *neck. He salutes him with a kiss upon the forehead.* Ilya *kneels before him.*

Ivan (*clasping his wife in his arms*)

The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away,
Good mother, grant that we may be faithful, even unto sorrow!

[*The wayfarers begin their departure, singing. As they climb the hill the peasants kneel, grouped about* Ilya.

Over the hills and the plains,
Over the streams and the sea,
Go we carefully,
Go we prayerfully,
Wandering pilgrims three.

Bearing a message of hope,
Bearing a message of joy,
From the appointed one,
From the anointed one,
Who shall all care destroy.

God who is patient and kind,
God who is loving and strong,
Sends thee a spotless youth,
Sends thee a shining truth,
Watch for the night is long!

Over the hills and the plains,
Over the streams and the sea,
Praising the Holy One,
Praising His gracious Son,
Praising the Blessed Three.

[*As the wayfarers disappear,* Ilya *rises to his feet and begins to ascend the hill. His mother rushes forward and attempts to dissuade him but* Ivan *gains his side and together the three make their way until half the hillside is gained. At this point* Ilya *gives his parents a last embrace. He then lifts aloft the cross hanging about his neck and his mother and father drop on their knees. The peasants, still kneeling, sing.*

SONG OF THE PEASANTS

Speed now thy servant on his way,
Armed with the weapons of thy might;
Be Thou his shining cloud by day
And guiding shaft of fire by night.

Keep his swift feet within the path
Trod by Thy gracious saints above,
Lay not on him Thy chastening wrath
But fold him gently in Thy love.

Until at last his journey done,
Exalted may he ever rest,
The good fight fought, the swift race won,
Among the company of the blest.

[*The* FIRST PEASANT *rushes up the hillside and places a cap upon* ILYA'S *head. The* SECOND PEASANT *follows swiftly and puts a pilgrim's staff in his hand. The far-away echo of the wayfarers' chorus comes to* ILYA'S *ears. He embraces his friends and begins to climb the hillside.*

CURTAIN

ACT II

At the foot of a mountain path on the Way to the Holy City. The entrance to a castle looms vaguely in the light of flickering torches.

[NIGHTINGALE, *the Robber, flies out of the gloom, breaking the woodland silence with devilish laughter.*

NIGHTINGALE

The night is swooning fast,
Its pallid fate forecast,
  As hushed it cowers.
Blackness foretells its doom,
Woven upon the loom
  Of ever-darkening hours.

Now through this sullen glade
The moon's cold glances fade,
  And all intent
Upon the wolf's drear howl,
Answers the twittering owl,
  In soft lament.

List to the amorous toads,
Lilting their croaking odes,
  Hard by the rim
Of lily-petaled ponds,
Ringed by unfolding fronds,
  Fern-green and dim.

This is the time for deeds,
Foul as the slimy weeds,
  Plucked from a pool
By noisesome drippings fed,
And stinking waters bred,
  Soft-choked with drool.

Come now my sharp-clawed flock,
Thy chest of dreams unlock,
  Loosening thy spell;
Break down Sleep's flimsy gate
With bludgeonings of hate,
  And unbind Hell!

[NIGHTINGALE'S *call is answered by shrill cries from his brood, who dart out of the gloom and with outstretched wings come gliding down the trail.* NIGHTINGALE *stands in the center of the stage, filling the night with horrible laughter as his brood execute a brief pantomimic dance. At the height of this orgy the door of the castle is thrown open and the figure of* ZLATIGORKA *emerges, followed by two attendants with flaming torches.* NIGHTINGALE *gives the signal for the birds to disperse. They flee up-stage and cower, listening in the dimness.* NIGHTINGALE, *himself, slinks into a shadowy corner and watches.*

ZLATIGORKA (*to her attendants*)

Lift higher thy torches!
The venom-tongued cries of Hell come not from shadows!
I would seek out these gaudy-voiced revelers,
Who suit my purpose and my mood in such shrill fashion.

[*As the attendants do her bidding,* NIGHTINGALE *comes slinking out of the gloom, fawning upon her.*

Ah, Nightingale, thou arrant robber,
So 'tis thou who seeks to thus beguile my casement
With sharp-toothed serenades! Come closer, fear me not;
Silence has pricked me deep with her cold fangs,
And tonight, thy throaty clamor drips like a stinging balm
Upon my wounds. Tell me, was the moon blood-red with fury,
Or hid she sullen and disdainful, at her rising,
Behind a smoke-dun cloud?
For I am gorged with bitter unquiet,
And sharp forebodings gnaw my vitals.
The sky must be thick-starred with flaming portents
Upon a night that brews so strong a draught of wakefulness
For my sleep-greedy lips!

NIGHTINGALE

Why seek from me a sign, thou mighty and unvanquished warrior-queen?
Hast thou no spells with which to snare
The future's red-fanged secrets?
Where is the boasted and silver-shining shield
That once did fend thy brave though mortal father?
Many a time saw I thy socerous mother
Lifting a torch above its brazen depths
At the dark hour before dawning;
And like a garrulous mirror its polished surface
Yielded the hidden purposes of Fate.

ZLATIGORKA

Thou dost but mock me with thine accursed truths!
This shield have I unfearsomely consulted
For weal or woe that must on others fall;
But I would, as lief, sever a crushed and dripping limb

From my fair body, as gaze with mine own eyes
Unscreened upon the scurvy tricks that Fate hath stored
Against my deep content.

NIGHTINGALE

Ha, Powerful Zlatigorka! Where now is thy prideful strength?
Art thou indeed strong in arm only, but in thy spirit
As timorous as a twittering sparrow?
Hast thou not learned that Fate hath chains
Only for the binding of them that fear her?
Bring forth thy father's shield and let *me* read the tale
That runs within the shining depths. And if it be too horrid,
I'll veil its ugliness in silken falsehoods.

ZLATIGORKA (*pacing restlessly up and down in indecision*)

Nightingale, art thou indeed a friendly knave,
Or dost thou plot to rob me of courage and my high estate
In one swift darting?

NIGHTINGALE (*fawning before her*)

Do humming-birds plot to o'erthrow the eagle's
Sky-blue empire? And is the bear's snug pit
Threatened by the assaults of nibbling hares?
Deny my friendship if thou wilt but grant to me, at least,
The soft-armed virtue of prudence.

ZLATIGORKA

The dripping honey of thy words doth almost lure me to thy purpose.
[*She paces about in further indecision.*
Well, as thou wilt!

[*To the attendants.*

Bring forth my father's valorous shield,
And let misfortune's messenger run swiftly to his journey's end!

[*One of the attendants hands his torch to the other and goes into the castle upon* ZLATIGORKA'S *errand. The enchantress stands in deep dejection but* NIGHTINGALE *can scarcely conceal his satisfaction. The attendant returns bearing the shield. At his entrance the brood of* NIGHTINGALE *who have been lurking in the shadows creep cautiously upon the upper stage and stand in close-locked groups, peering down. As the attendant passes* ZLATIGORKA *with shield up-borne, she shrinks behind her own shield as if fearful to catch even a brief glimpse of its telltale depths.* NIGHTINGALE *motions the first attendant to set the shield upon the ground. The second attendant steps forward and returns the torch to his companion. These two range themselves on either side of the shield, holding the torches directly over it.* NIGHTINGALE *stoops between them, peering down into its polished surface.* ZLATIGORKA *stands expectantly but with averted face.*

NIGHTINGALE

Now Fate doth spin her net
Misfortune's snare to set
With threads of chance;
And in this shining shield
Her hidden secrets yield
To my keen glance.

Within the brazen rim
Flashes in outlines dim
  A form, swift-paced;
Valiant and undefiled,
Comely but unbeguiled,
  Thick-loined yet chaste!

Into this leafy bower
Strays he with righteous power,
  Unchained by sins;
Hung not with sword nor spear,
Yet knowing naught of fear
  His mate he wins!

ZLATIGORKA (*with a confident laugh*)

Tell me, is this the dribbling yield of prophesy
From so prodigal a sowing? The figure of thy visioning
Smells more to me of dung-hill than of battle-sweat!
  [*Musingly.*
Hung not with sword nor spear!

NIGHTINGALE (*interrupting*)

Yet knowing *naught* of *fear!*

ZLATIGORKA (*impatiently*)

Think thou our woodland fastness
Is to be made the sport of fools?
Ignorance and courage doth ever couch together.
Thou knowst well it is decreed that I shall be invincible
Save to that warrior who can in fair-won fight
Subdue me to his rough-shod will, melting my steel-cold chastity
Within the red flame of his yearning.
Look ye again and seek a further sign
With which to match such valiant prophesies!

NIGHTINGALE (*bending over the shield again*)

With measured tread and slow,
Vague phantom-figures grow
  In endless chain.
By tear-crowned sorrow led,
Soft to the marriage-bed
  Of Death, glides pain.

Struck by the torches' beam,
A shaft of golden gleam,
  Untouched by dross,
Rises to meet my gaze
As with profane amaze
  I glimpse the Cross!

[*At the mention of the Holy Symbol the torches are mysteriously extinguished and Nightingale's brood fall terror-stricken on their faces.* ZLATIGORKA *shrinks again behind her up-raised shield.*

NIGHTINGALE (*gliding to* ZLATIGORKA'S *side*)

Didst thou find this last visioning to thy taste?
Or shall we light the Heaven-blown torches once again
And tempt Fate's ugly purpose further?

ZLATIGORKA

The Cross!
Tis strong enough in sooth! . . . What's to be done?

NIGHTINGALE (*mockingly*)

What's to be done!
Do my ears play me false, or is this then indeed
The skimming eaglet of the ice-carved pinnacles

Seeking the favor of a thicket nestling?
Thou art proud, with reason, Warrior-Queen,
But, until this night, thou rose disdainful
And self-sufficient in thy power.
Not so thy socerous mother. With all her skill,
Bound she the loyalty of her woodland friends
With the swift thongs of service.
He who stands singly stands on scant ground!
Tis well, I bend my neck to thy commands.
Grant me the single boon of charméd life
And I shall ever do thy bidding!

ZLATIGORKA (*lifting her shield above* NIGHTINGALE'S *prostrate body and placing her foot upon his neck*)

So long as I, myself, shall life endure
Thou shalt by neither dart nor ill be slain!

NIGHTINGALE (*leaping to his feet*)

Now shall I be immortal! For we twain
Casting our lots together can, like a yelping wolf-pack,
Keep Death at bay and scorn the very Gilded Cross, itself!
Advance, my thick-spurred brood, and bow thyself
Before this dual throne of power!

[*At* NIGHTINGALE'S *command his brood flutter down the hillside and prostrate themselves before* ZLATIGORKA *and* NIGHTINGALE. *Safe in the assurance of a charmed life,* NIGHTINGALE *has lost his fawning manner and stands erect and imperious.*

ZLATIGORKA

What sound was that,
A woodland whisper fluttering from top-most branch,

Or hath the wind plucked from its place a dew-starred cob-web
And dashed it free of its filched jewels against some gaunt and naked twig?

NIGHTINGALE (*putting a hand to his ear*)

I hear the muffled beat
And glide of swift-sure feet
Sifting adown the gloom;
Let us in purple shade
Go creeping undismayed
Plotting pale virtue's doom!

[*To* ZLATIGORKA

From thy sword-latticed bower,
Watch thou in brooding power
The coming morn.
By powers low or high
On earth will Heaven die
Or Hell be born!

[*The brood melt up-stage into the shadows where they can be dimly seen.* ZLATIGORKA *enters the castle, followed by her attendants who close the door.* NIGHTINGALE *slinks into the gloom and, crouching, waits for the coming of the traveler whose foot-falls have so disturbed them.* ILYA *enters confidently and peering about the gloom catches sight of the castle.*

ILYA (*starting toward the flaming torches before the castle's entrance*)

What beacon-lights are these starring the pall-hung night?
Are they friendly eyes winking me to gracious shelter,
Or do they glare in somber anger like prowling beasts of prey?

[*He advances almost to the castle door.*

A goodly portal! yet it frowns with close-locked mouth.
A moment since and weariness was stranger to me,
But here, within a short-paced stride of entertainment,
Sleep weights my dust-stung lids.
Aye, now I know the sweet content of a sweat-wrung repose!
I'll beat upon the door and see if honest needs
Can set this threshold smiling out a welcome.

[*He beats upon the door with his pilgrim's staff. The door opens slowly and* ZLATIGORKA, *unattended, steps out into the night.*

ZLATIGORKA (*haughtily*)

Whence comes this cloutish clamor,
Breaking the virgin stillness of these woods in noisy ravishment?
Thou vile-coated varlet, tell me thy name,
And, as well, the fly-blown dung-hill which bred thee!

ILYA (*proudly*)

Ilya is my name. And my good sire and mother
With honorable labor do reap their fields and fell their trees
Within the sweet-strewn forest of Murom.

ZLATIGORKA (*in a rage*)

What! Can I have heard aright?
Hath this world waxed so mean that I, the far-famed Zlatigorka,
Warrior-Queen and dark Enchantress, must find my dream-decked slumbers
Rent in twain by the thick-fingered brutishness
Of lumbering peasant-breed?

Come closer, thou reckless fool, and tell me, if thou canst,
What punishment I may devise for thy undoing.

[ILYA *draws close to* ZLATIGORKA, *half shyly, half boldly. As he catches a near-view of her face he starts back a trifle and then, with an impetuous movement forward, he answers.*

ILYA

If 't were punishment to serve thee, beauteous creature,
Forge me thick chains of mighty tasks and I shall languish happily
In harsh imprisonment forever!

ZLATIGORKA

Ye friends! What next will my thrice-doubting ears report?
Art thou gone suddenly mad?

ILYA

Mad? . . . Thou sayest truly!
Give me thy lips and take whatever wage thy fancy fashions!

ZLATIGORKA

My lips! Thou swine! Thou sweat-stale plough-boy!
Know thou not that my fierce favors
Are to the mightiest warriors themselves denied?
Lives there no man within a six-months' journey
Who can with sword or lance wrest from me
My virgin hoard! Invincible throughout the countless years,
I wait the doom of spear-won mating!
Think thou then, that what the gods themselves
Find from their strong-armed reach,
Will fall a worm-cursed apple into thy loutish hands?

ILYA

How I shall come by thy sweet gifts I care not!
Only this I know, I have the strength to hurl
The mightiest of these forest giants to sprawling length
Upon the mouldering sward.
If 'tis thy purpose then to wield thy spear against me
And play the warrior, lay on, and let Heaven itself
Proclaim the victor!

ZLATIGORKA

Rash youth, rush not so speedily to thy doom!
If thy scant brains have by wan-moonlit wanderings been addled,
I'll let thee go in peace.
I am no petty princess, seeking to entrap a puling fool.
Think thou that I would match this spear
Against a path-worn pilgrim's staff?

ILYA (*mockingly*)

What! art thou cowed down already by my boasts?
Lift high thy shining spear and let me prove
The warrior blood which pricks my veins so hotly!

[*As* ILYA *finishes his speech, he provokes the reluctant* ZLATIGORKA *to battle with a sharp blow struck by his pilgrim's staff against her spear. They fight furiously. Meanwhile, with a malignant laugh,* NIGHTINGALE *rushes from the shadows and attempts to harrass* ILYA. *His efforts are unavailing for, finally,* ILYA *gets the upper hand of the enchantress. He strikes her spear to the ground with his staff, and rushing upon her, grasps her in his two strong hands and brings her to her feet.*

ILYA

Gracious Queen, what would you now?

ZLATIGORKA (*adoringly*)

Naught but thy pleasure,
Thou beetle-browed and ripe-lipped youth!

NIGHTINGALE

Ye fiends of Hell!
What net is this spread for our snaring?
[*To his brood.*
Rise up, thou sharp of beak,
Thy spur-keen vengeance reek
Upon yon guileless fool!
With claw and swift-winged dart
Pluck eyes and bathe his heart
In blood-red pool!

[*The brood rush down, and, led by* NIGHTINGALE, *proceed to attack* ILYA. ZLATIGORKA, *recovering herself, turns upon her protectors. Finally, worsted, the brood flutter up the hillside.* NIGHTINGALE *flies helplessly about pursued by* ILYA, *who brandishes his staff.*

NIGHTINGALE

Help, traitorous Queen! Remember thou our pact!

[ILYA *is in the act of bringing down his staff upon the head of* NIGHTINGALE *when* ZLATIGORKA *puts forth a staying hand upraised as she chants a spell.*

ZLATIGORKA

With my hand thus raised full well
Cast I now my sorcerous spell

While I live thou may not die
Though I would thy boon deny!

[ILYA'S *arm stiffens and the staff falls from his hand. With an exultant shout* NIGHTINGALE *prepares to flee.* ZLATIGORKA *again stretches forth her hand.*

ZLATIGORKA

Gloom-bred robber, stay thy flight,
I shall clip thy sharp-clawed might,
Bind thee harmless as a dove
In the gilded chains of love!

[NIGHTINGALE *falls suddenly forward on his face.*

ZLATIGORKA (*calling in a loud voice*)

What ho there, my minions!

[*The attendants appear at the door of the castle.*

Bring forth my father's shining shield,
His two-edged sword, his pluméd helmet
And the blue cloak with ermine rimmed.

[*The attendants depart.*

For this, my vanquisher, must be in worthy state
Armed and apparelled as befits his might!

[*The attendants return and* ZLATIGORKA *invests* ILYA *with helmet, shield, cloak and sword.*

Now art thou indeed a prince!
Ilya, plough-boy no longer, but Ilya, the valiant Cossack,
Who hath dethroned with ease a virgin Queen!
Never in battle shalt thou die,
For he who girds himself
With this two-edged and magic sword,
Shall conquer all!

[*She turns to the attendants again.*

Search ye the dungeon for strong-linked chains,
And bring them to me!

NIGHTINGALE (*lying inert*)

Have a care, thou spawn of loathing and deceit!
Remember I have still my thoughts, and can with evil
Breed swamp-sour ills that yet will spell thy doom.

[*The attendants appear;* ZLATIGORKA *takes the chains from them and slips the shining links belt-wise about* NIGHTINGALE'S *middle. Then she drags him to the spot where* ILYA *stands in new-found arrogance.*

ZLATIGORKA

Sweet Prince, here helpless lies thy fluttering foe!
Bind him where and by what means thou wilt,
And, when thou look upon him, think that thus enslaved
Doth my fond heart lie prone beneath thy red-lipped smile!

[ILYA *takes the tether and spear from* ZLATIGORKA. *He leads* NIGHTINGALE *to the upper stage, and, thrusting the spear in the ground, tethers* NIGHTINGALE *to it.*

ILYA

Now then, thou feathered demon,
Weave trouble as thou wilt in the dark caverns of thy mind!
If thoughts alone can wound, do then thy worst,
For we shall match thy brooding with equal power!

[NIGHTINGALE *spits at* ILYA *with loathing but remains silent, pacing restlessly back and forth like a caged animal. As* ILYA *descends to the lower*

stage the faint sound of the wayfarers' hymn is heard far off in the distance. ILYA *stands transfixed and listening.* ZLATIGORKA *moves swiftly to his side. She takes his hand and attempts to beguile him gently from his rapt attention.*

ZLATIGORKA

My warrior, hast thou so soon forgot thy weaponless slave?

ILYA (*recalled from his musings but still listening*)

Some old and distant song seems now to trap my senses
In the sweet snare of memory. I would I could remember!

ZLATIGORKA

Memory is the dull child of yesterday,
Come, live within the present's fair-decked chamber!
[*She persuades him nearer and nearer the castle door.*
Tonight we'll drop the crimson curtain of our joy
And shut out e'en the future!
[*Placing her shield-girt arm about his neck she shuts out the sound of music from his troubled ears and together they enter the castle. The wayfarers' hymn grows nearer and fades away again.*

NIGHTINGALE

Sweet Night, fond shroud of darkness,
Let ever thy black pall enwrap my woe in dunnest weeds,
And sharpen my revenge upon the flint-harsh stone of sorrow!
Fly thou in ribald dartings, my pestilent fledglings,
And, with thy profane carolings and whirr of wings,

Drown out the holy song that would recall our love-sick vanquisher
To his invincible purity!
Hold him but a short space within the narrow cell of love
And then, full truly, shall Hell be spawned anew
Upon a helpless world!

[NIGHTINGALE'S *brood dash out of the gloom and dance in wild abandon until the sound of the wayfarers' hymn becomes stronger and stronger. The dim figures of the wayfarers appear, coming down the steep trail. The brood flee and* NIGHTINGALE *crouches close to the spear to which he is chained. Singing, the wayfarers pass close to the castle and disappear.*

SONG OF THE WAYFARERS

Over the hills and the plains
  Over the streams and the sea
Come we in mourning
Come we in warning
  List to our humble plea!

Ilya turn from thy way
  Ilya turn from thy path
Think of the race unrun
Think of the fight unwon
  Think of God's righteous wrath.

Canst thou so soon forget,
  Canst thou so soon deny
He who hath filled thy cup
He who hath raised thee up
  In holy power all-high?

Over the hills and the plains
Over the streams and the sea
Bowed low by heavy years
Bowed low by anxious fears
Weary and sad come we.

[*As the last wayfarer disappears, the door of the castle is suddenly thrown open.* ILYA *rushes out pursued by* ZLATIGORKA.

ZLATIGORKA

My lord, what madness now hath seized thee?

ILYA

Destroyer of my peace, keep thy good distance!
How well do I remember now the music
That fond Heaven, itself, did waft to me, in gracious warning.
And all too swift at this late hour
Comes to my mind the holy pilgrim's charge:
Keep thy heart clean and trust not to the wiles of women!

ZLATIGORKA (*in panic*)

Canst thou find in thy heart the will to thus desert me
In the full-flush of joy? Have I not bound in chains
Thy feathered foe in joyful symbol of our union?

[ILYA *rushes upon* NIGHTINGALE *and dashes the spear which tethers the bird-demon to the ground. Then, grasping the chain in his strong hands, he proceeds to flee up the trail dragging* NIGHTINGALE *with him.*

ILYA

Symbol of joy no longer shall this chained monster be,
But rather will I keep him close-tethered neath my gaze

Ever a reminder of my loathsome sin!
Farewell, thou warrior Queen, let sorrow sting thee deep!
For I was pledged to sinless ways in token of my sure deliverance
Thus to rejoice the world sinful and sad.
But thou, unholy woman, hast dashed these hopes still-born
Upon the rocks of red desire!

ZLATIGORKA

Not so! If thou hast lost all thought of me,
Think of thy son who one day shall this earth
Shake with his mighty tread!
Stay, and with valorous arm, school him in deeds of power!

ILYA

My son? . . . Foul schemer thou liest!
Virtue and sin have never couched together to fruitful purpose!
Nay, I'll not listen further! But to the Holy City
Shall I flee for sanctuary and pardon!

NIGHTINGALE (*with malicious laughter*)

Farewell, ungrateful witch,
My withering curse upon thy quickening body!
Soon may the blight begin!

[*To* ILYA.

And thou, foul son of weak-kneed Virtue,
Trick not thyself in the vain hope that lies
Are ever in her mouth. She speaks the truth!
Thy son shall live to set a price of bitter sorrow and drearest woe
Upon thy sore-won pardon!

And through the biting years, footsore and battle-scarred,
Shall thou seek vainly the sun-lit road
Which leads to consecration. The Holy City
May be glimpsed afar, but like the Promised Land
Unentered save by purity or perfect penance.

[*With a despairing cry,* ZLATIGORKA *falls to the ground.* ILYA *rushes up the hill dragging the struggling* NIGHTINGALE, *as the dawn approaches. At each turn in the trail a group of bird-demons dart out at* ILYA *but the sight of the upraised cross which he holds aloft sends them cowering from him. The wayfarers' hymn sounds in the distance.*

CURTAIN

ACT III

The scene is the same as in Act I. Twenty years have elapsed. It is twilight. The sound of chimes is heard and the peasants drift on the stage singing.

CHORUS OF PEASANTS

See the slender brook on the hillside,
With its silver trickle on the hillside,
Liuli, liuli, the brooklet!
Liuli, liuli, the gay one!

[*Following the sound of the chimes they disappear, with the exception of* MARYA, *who kneels before a rude shrine. From the distance come the voices of the peasants singing an evening hymn:*

Stainless Virgin, thou whose feet were weary,
Where, sad Mother, didst thou shelter find?
Blessed Lady, sorrowing for thy lost One,
Where, O where, Mother, didst thou close thy tired eyes?
O'er high hills and valleys lowly,
Through the woodland wild,
Weeping she went her way,
Seeking, Christ, her child.
As the shadows fell there came
Footsore pilgrims three:
"I beg thee, holy men,
Hast thou passed my son?"

[*During this song the twilight has deepened, and the peasants return singing:*

Watch the golden stars in the heavens,
One by one they glisten in the heavens,
Liuli, liuli, they glisten!
Liuli, liuli, they beckon!

[*As the peasants finish their singing the* First Peasant *catches sight of* Marya's *kneeling form and calls* Ivan's *attention to her.*

Ivan (*shaking his head*)

Aye, poor soul!
Thus doth she pour out her life in vain petitions
For the son who was made whole for our sorrow,
The days were happier, by far, when he lay
Sweet-voiced and helpless before our humble shelter.
Remember thou this day twenty years agone
When, in blood-red might, he leapt high,
And waked us with the sharp laughter of his ringing axe?

First Peasant

Twenty years? Dost thou say truly?
Yes, I remember well! We brought him gifts
And he rebuked us in all gentleness,
For our unthinking woodland thefts.
He was a tender lad in his affliction;
I would that he had been as kindly in his might!
Perhaps, then, he had not left the little mother
Clucking sorrowfully, like a ruffling hen,
Robbed of her feathered chicks.

Ivan

Thou dost forget, he had the will to sow and reap with us,
But Heaven's purpose was otherwise. Callst thou not to mind
The Holy Men, and how they charged him with his duty?

First Peasant

Aye . . . and many times have I thought on it!
Who knows, perhaps the swiftest path to God
Lies in the duty near at hand.
And Christ, Himself, was ever mindful of his mother.

Ivan

Ah, well, we must not quarrel with God's good purpose.
To some the road is long and ever-winding;
To others, straight and clear and shining to its end.
The nest-tied lark doth never fleck the blue of noon-day
With sweet-songed dartings!

First Peasant

Nor is the mouse who keeps his hole
Torn by owlet's dripping beak!

Ivan (*shaking his head*)

Why argue further? What lark or mouse
Or man among us can withstand his fate?

[*During* Ivan's *speech the figure of* Ilya *is seen coming down the trail, leading the dejected* Nightingale *by a chain.*

Ivan

Tell me, have I still my dull but honest senses?
Is this the figure of a man winding adown the hill,
Leading a monstrous bird as if it were the dancing pet bear
Of some wandering mountebank?

First Peasant

In very truth it is! Hey, there, my man!
What jugglery dost thou perform?

[*With eager cries and much jostling the peasants crowd about* Ilya *as he arrives in their midst.*

ILYA

Thou unmannerly loons! Hast never seen before a warrior
In his shining armour? The sound of pleasant music
Lured me hither, but I had better turned my feet
To the ribald turmoil of some shameless market-place
For all the solace that thy noisy welcome gives.
What is the name of this sweet-scented wood
That harbors such a motley brood?

FIRST PEASANT (*stepping forward*)

We are but simple folk, good sir,
With scant acquaintanceship with sorceries
That yield up birds of giant form for cow-like leading.
These are the woods of Murom.

ILYA (*overcome as he gazes wonderingly about*)

Murom! . . . So 'tis to this vain end that all my years
Of sword-hewn wanderings have come!
Sweet Heaven, rob me of my might,
And give me back the sweet-sad days of my impotent youth,
Thrilled by the lark's cool song,
Wooed to soft day-dreams by the whispering pines,
And wrapt in holy fragrance of the flowers!

[*The peasants whisper together, while the bolder ones provoke the dejected* NIGHTINGALE *to quick darts and spittings.*

IVAN

Fair sir, if thou hast traveled sore and suffered,
Tarry with us a season, and so refresh thyself.
We are but humble folk, as he hath said,
But wanderers are ever close to our soft hearts.

I have a son, who, if he lives, I doubt not,
Hath many tired and foot-sore moments.

ILYA (*with emotion*)

If 'twere my lot I would thy gracious welcome wear
To thread-bare end. But rest and peace and fair security
May not be mine until the will of God hath been accomplished.
This feathered monster, which thou all doth view with such wide-mouthed amaze,
Is but a living symbol of my great unworthiness.
And I have sworn to wander far and wide in his unwholesome company,
Till pitiful Heaven, with flaming sign, release me from my holy vow!

[*He takes* IVAN *by the shoulders and gazes intently at him.*

Gracious father, knowst thou not me?

IVAN (*starting back in amazement*)

Ilya . . . this thou! My son!

[*With a cry,* MARYA *rushes forward, sweeps her husband aside and throws herself into* ILYA'S *arms. The peasants crowd forward in great excitement but at this moment the* SECOND PEASANT *is seen running breathlessly down the trail and he breaks in upon the throng with a loud announcement.*

SECOND PEASANT

Comrades! Prince Vladimir and all his court
Come to this woodland fastness for a revelry.
To-night, as I returned from marketing,
Met I the wondrous company wending their way

With trumpeting and merry jests and valorous boasting!

[*The sound of trumpets is heard.*

Hark! Already are they here!

We'll look upon brave sights before the dawning!

[*The peasants fall away to the sides of the lower stage as winding down the trail come the Court of Vladimir with a flourish of trumpets and music. The trumpeters come first, then the Metropolitan, bearing a huge golden icon, preceded by acolytes carrying the Bread and Salt, the Chalice, and swinging censors. Then follow the servants bearing platters with a boar's head, roast swan, fruits, and flagons of wine. Finally advances the Prince, himself, followed by the nobles and warriors of the Court. A table is swiftly laid upon the upper stage and an altar is set up upon which is deposited the icon, the Bread and Salt and the covered Chalice. When all is ready, the nobles range themselves about the table, and, at a sign from Prince Vladimir, are seated. Before seating himself the Metropolitan blesses the company with upraised forefingers. The court acknowledges the benediction with swiftly bowed heads, but the peasants bend very low.*

VLADIMIR (*standing*)

Nobles, warriors, goodly friends,
I see that thou art puzzled at our royal whim
For woodland feasting; and with good reason.
Thy prince, as thou hast guessed, hath a deep purpose
Behind this empty screen of revelry.
Our royal city, as thou knowst, is daily scourged
And nightly sore beset by keen terrors that have sprung
Full-fledged to strong-armed evil.

For five and twenty days has the shining blue of Heaven
Been darkened at unseemly times by the swift flights
Of this foul god of dread repute, Falcon the Hunter,
Riding the sky and hurling fiery darts
Upon the golden pinnacles of our sweet-chimed cathedral.
With such an evil circumstance hovering aloft
It would be folly's height to plot its doom
Under the weighty canopy of gilded roofs
And rough-hewn timbers. Thus did we, in royal wisdom,
Decide upon this star-hung spot as safest for our gathering.
For here, though Falcon may be mighty, he cannot rend the sky
And make of it a shroud for our untimely end.
Now, come we to the meat of what we purpose;
How many of you here, knowing the dreadful terror of his might,
The fiery keenness of his lightning flash, the thunder of his voice,
Will undertake to stay him when, in burning flight,
He next essays his hurtling ride athwart the speechless heavens?

THE NOBLES (*rising with swords upraised*)

We, all of us, in company or singly,
As thou wilt!

VLADIMIR

We thank thee, valiant knights!
Knew we full well that not the humblest in our court
But would fly quickly to the clarion-call of service.
Pass now the flagons of our gold-green wine,
And let thy loyalty be sealed in brimming cups.
Again our thanks go out to you!
Let us to meat and then to well-seasoned councilling.

[*The nobles seat themselves and the Metropolitan again raises his fingers in blessing. At this point,* Ilya *ties* Nightingale *to a tree, and marches boldly up to the banquet-table, with drawn sword. At his appearance,* Vladimir *and several of the nobles rise haughtily to their feet.*

Vladimir

How now, thou sword-girt rustic?
This is no time for vain petitioning!
Canst thou not grant thy sovereign Prince a courteous privacy,
E'en though our fancy chooses to hang
Naught but the torch-pierced curtain of night
About our festal board?

Ilya (*drawing himself up in dignity*)

Gracious Prince, thou dost misread my purpose;
I bear no whining pleas for charity!
My ears are ever opened to the call of service;
Here is my sword, direct it where thou wilt.

Vladimir (*sarcastically*)

Our thanks to you, brave peasant knight!
At present speaking our court is hard beset with mighty perils,
But, at a calmer day, mayhap a simpler ill
Will wait upon thy well-intentioned remedy.

[*Glancing about the table.*

Good friends, crowd up toward me a space,
That this rash valiant may find a place to sup with us!

[*With much pushing and derisive laughter the nobles shift their positions and leave a place at the foot of the table. The* Prince *motions* Ilya *to be seated.*

ILYA (*in a rage*)

Dost thou so rudely jest with me, noble Prince?
Is this mean seat at table's very end
The measure of thy hospitality and my worth?

VLADIMIR

Presumest thou to set a rating on thy merit
Beyond these knights, whose swords and spears
And lives themselves, are ever listed in the cause
Of this our Holy Russia?
Who art thou, that with such gross impertinence,
Dares to rebuke thy sovereign lord?

ILYA

I am Ilya, the valiant Cossack,
Who, for twenty years, has wandered up and down
The length and breadth of this fair land,
Wresting from God, with deeds of might and goodliness,
A pardon for the one sin which binds me in a weary thrall.
If fair report has kept the word of my achievement from thy noble ears,
Then Fame, indeed, is but a mute and jealous godess!

VLADIMIR

Ilya, the valiant Cossack!
If thy speech is truthful, then Heaven itself hath sent thee hither, this night!
Thy fame and might are on the lips of wise men;
And fools cease their babbling at the mention of thy name!
Draw nearer and let me clasp thy hand,
And sit thee at my side, sharing my cup in perfect fellowship.

[VLADIMIR, *with the utmost deference, leads* ILYA *to a place at his side. Instinctively the nobles make way, rising and standing in their places.*

Fearless stranger, what is thy quest? Whence comest thou?
And what favored spot claimed thee at thy birth?

ILYA

Vainly I seek the Holy City and God's consecration,
But Heaven's displeasure hath closed the shining road to my poor feet
And I am doomed to stray in endless circles
Glimpsing the Promised Land but scarcely entering it.
My wanderings have been long and devious,
And I would but weary thee and all thy court
With tales of my exploits. The name of my birthplace
Is more quickly told. Saw I the light of day
In these very woods of Murom.
Below my sire and mother stand, and all my good companions,
Of a gentler day.

VLADIMIR

This is indeed a pleasant circumstance,
And augurs well for our exploit.

[*To the servants.*

I pray you carry refreshment to these worthy rustics
Who honor God and Holy Russia with such fruitful issue.

[*The servants carry down baskets of fruit and distribute them among the peasants.*

NIGHTINGALE (*pacing restlessly back and forth at the spot where he is tethered*)

Swiftly the strands of fate
In warp and woof of hate
Are woven true.
And the appointed hour
Chimes from misfortune's tower
With clamorous hue!

[*As he finishes, he gives forth a peal of dreadful laughter which affrights the peasants and brings the nobles to their feet.*

VLADIMIR (*in consternation*)

What dreadful sound is that
Breaking upon our revelry with such foreboding?

ILYA

Noble sire, have no fear!
Tis but the living symbol of my sin, Nightingale the Robber,
Who, with strong chains, is bound against all further mischief.
He and his loathsome brood were once the scourge of pious travelers
In that drear wood, bordering the Black Morass.
But, even with their freedom, would he and all his fledgelings
Be naught against my valor. For, know you not, I bear a charméd life?
Never in battle shall I be slain while this two-edged
And glistening sword is in my hand!

[*A sudden and terrible whistling of wind sweeps the wood; lightnings flash, the thunder roars, the stage grows dark. Midway upon the trail appears the brilliant figure of* FALCON, *the Hunter. The nobles cower in fright as do the peasants below. Only* ILYA *stands erect and unafraid.*

FALCON (*in a loud and terrible voice*)

Where is this thief and braggart who boasts of charméd life?
Let him withstand my fiery darts if he but can;
And then, if there is still a puff of whispering breath
Within his stinking carcass, he'll have good cause for boasting!

ILYA (*running up the hill to meet his adversary*)

I am here thou arrant liar and white-livered spawn of weakness!
Come, do thy worst, and let me prove myself!

[*They grapple and wrestle together. The nobles, recovering themselves, begin to encourage* ILYA *with cries and taunts. The peasants still cower, afraid.* NIGHTINGALE *laughs sardonically. Finally,* FALCON *wrests himself free of* ILYA *and hurls a fiery dart at him.* ILYA *stands smiling and unscathed.*

ILYA

Thou art a dauntless foe and worthy of my mettle!
But, look thee, how thy darts turn back from my charméd body!
Brave youth, tell me thy land and horde and father.

FALCON

What need hast thou of such full knowledge?
Shave thee thy head while there is yet good time
And get thee to a monastery!

[*They renew the fight.* ILYA *presently gets the upper hand and, pinning his adversary close against the bank, draws his sword.*

ILYA

Tell me thy parenthood, good youth.
I would know the sire and dam who bred such courage!

FALCON

My mother is Zlatigorka, the gentle warrior queen.
My father know I in name only.
Ilya, the Valiant Cossack, is he called.

ILYA (*falling back and releasing* FALCON)

Gracious Heaven, can this be true?

VALDIMIR (*tauntingly*)

How now, boastful Ilya?
Canst not dispatch this festering pestilence?
Where is the fealty and might thou swore to me?

ILYA

Sweet Prince, this is my son, sprung from my very loins,
Flesh of my flesh, with my hot blood pricking him to wrathful valor.
Let me but plead with him the while in penitent chivalry
To cast his lot with mine for holy strivings.

VLADIMIR

Not so! He is a deadly scourge!
Thy first loyalty is to thy God, thy country and thy Prince!
Dispatch him as thou hast sworn, or, by our Sacred Lord,
We'll see it done by fair or foul means!

ILYA

Speak not so rashly. I, and I alone, have power for his undoing.

[*He turns to* FALCON

Swear fealty to thy father and yon Prince, my beauteous son,
And straightway shall I release thee from thy doom.
Go thou again in peace to thy fond mother,
Who once in virgin fierceness sought to turn from my purpose;
Tell her my anger and my loathing have by thy doughty valiance
Been swallowed up.

From this night on, shall I her image cherish,
Forever in a soft and golden heart.

FALCON

What! thou my father? Thou loutish peasant in a masquerade of knightly splendor!

[*Turning toward the hillside and calling loudly.*

What ho! My mother!
Zlatigorka, appear, and choke this feeble lie
Back in the throat of one who would escape my might
By rustic trickery!

[*Far up on the hillside the figure of* ZLATIGORKA *appears.*

ZLATIGORKA

Falcon, thou mighty hunter, son of my gentler years,
Didst thou call me? Or have the whispering trees
Made sport of anxious ears with sounds of sweet deceit?

FALCON

Thou wert called indeed! Here stands a man of dung-hill breed,
Who would persuade me that nature in a devilish gambol
Did snare thee as his mate, and that I am sprung
From such a filthy marriage-bed!

ZLATIGORKA (*peering down intently at* ILYA)

Fair and reckless Falcon, he says truly!
Bow thou in all pride and fond humility upon the ground before his feet.
For thou art happy in a sire whom none can conquer!
He did forget me speedily and wound me sore
But from the scourge of his disdain rose I to gentler power.
The feet of mighty men must ever crush,
Whatever stands within the paths they blaze!

FALCON

Thou shameless bawd! Thou hussey! Thou whore!
Better had I from deep oblivion been ne'r released
Than had such stinking scum as this for father!
Tis well, I'll see that nevermore shall warrior-blood
Be fouled by taint of vileness!

[FALCON *lifts his right hand high and hurls a dart at* ZLATIGORKA. *As it strikes her she gives a stricken cry and falls dead.*

ILYA (*rushing upon* FALCON)

What hast thou done, thou white and leprous sin made flesh?
Thought I at first to spare thee, but now, thou diest!
And with thee all my guilt and heavy penance!

[ILYA *draws his magic sword and runs* FALCON *through.* FALCON'S *body falls to the ground.* ILYA *gives a despairing cry and staggers down the trail.* VLADIMIR *meets him half-way.*

ILYA (*wailing*)

He was my son, fair of form and keen of eye!
He was my son, mighty in battle and full of valor!
He was my son, and by his father's hand he died!

VLADIMIR (*presenting him to the Metropolitan*)

Here is God's chosen instrument for good.
Present thou him a living sacrifice before the throne of grace,
For he hath purchased our release from terror at a grievous price!

THE METROPOLITAN (*chanting*)

The Lord distributeth sorrows in his anger,
And dominion and fear are with him.
Yet he maketh his peace in high places
And with his right hand doth he put out the candle of the wicked.

[*He removes* ILYA'S *helmet and places his two hands in blessing upon* ILYA'S *head as he kneels before the Icon.*

The Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the faithful
And if they be bound in fetters of sin
Or holden in cords of affliction,
Then he sheweth them his work and openeth their ears to his discipline,
That they may spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure.

VLADIMIR (*to the attendants*)

Take litters in thy hands and lay these heathen dead
In readiness for decent burial. Perhaps his sacrifice
Will cleanse them of profane corruption and set the seal
Of Christian grace upon them!

[*To the solemn notes of a funeral march the attendants ascend the hill with litters upon which they deposit the dead. At the same time the acolytes distribute candles among the peasants who light them and kneel between the two biers as they are placed finally on the lower stage.* ILYA *rises from his knees and moves slowly and sorrowfully down to the lower level where he stands gazing tenderly at the dead.*

ILYA

Fond mate of sudden springtime,
Thou wert indeed closer to my heart

Than God's cold penance would allow!
And thou, too, impetuous blossom of love's golden summering,
I would that thy cold lips might, for but one brief moment,
Call me in tenderness and proud acknowledgement—father!

NIGHTINGALE (*with bantering laughter*)

Daring Ilya! Valiant Cossack!
So tis to this brave ending that all thy boasting paths have led!
Who now is mightier, a father robbed of his fair issue by his own hand,
Or Nightingale, the Robber, whose hate and malice
Can by no hot-forged chains be safely bound?
Recallst thou not my warning:
Thy son shall live to set a price
Of bitter sorrow and drearest woe
Upon thy sore-won pardon?

ILYA

Aye . . . thou wert ever gifted in foul prophesies!
Perhaps thy memory serves thee also for thine own swift doom!
This valiant Queen who pledged thy safety is no more,
And with her died thy curst immunity!

[ILYA *crosses over to* NIGHTINGALE *and, catching him by the throat, strangles him and flings his body upon the ground.*

So let all thy sinister flock languish and die with thee,
And, from their mouldering carcasses arise,
No more a serpent-hissing brood, but, by the grace of God,
Sweet singers that shall wake the moon-lit hours
To swooning ecstacy!

THE METROPOLITAN (*appearing on the edge of the upper stage and swinging a censor in blessing*)

The Lord doth build up his holy city;
He lifteth up the meek and He casteth the wicked on the ground.
He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds;
He gathereth together the outcasts and the forsaken.
The Lord telleth the number of stars and He calleth them by their names.
Great is His power and his understanding is infinite!

[*As the* METROPOLITAN *finishes, the kneeling peasants break into song.*

SONG OF THE PEASANTS

Lord, grant these dead a sure release,
From all their vain and wilful debt;
Receive their souls and give them peace
And on their brows forgiveness set.

They were but shaped to meet thy plans
So let them lie in sweet repose
And as our faith thy anger spans
Bud thorns of sin with pardon's rose.

[*The wayfarers' chorus is heard and midway upon the trail the wayfarers appear, climbing upward.*

SONG OF THE WAYFARERS

Over the hills and the plains
Over the streams and the sea
Come we in gladness
Robbed of all sadness
Chanting our Lord's decree.

Now is the morning come
Now is the blackness flown
Sorrow and strife doth end
Peasant and prince doth bend
Before one throne!

Ilya, thou art thrice blessed
Ilya, thou art thrice free;
Praise thou the Holy One
Praise thou his Gracious Son,
Praise thou the Blessed Three!

[*As the wayfarers reach the highest point, they range themselves with the first wayfarer in the center and the others on either side.*

ILYA

Now doth the thorn-hedged path of yester-year laugh with sweet-scented bloom,
And, in a shining course, stretches its way with arrow swiftness
To the Holy City where I shall seal God's pardon
Beneath the gilded canopy of His wondrous sanctuary.
Farewell, sweet friends! Good sire and mother adieu!
Once more I go about my Father's business and in His gracious care I leave thee, all!

[ILYA *mounts to the upper stage where he is met by* VLADIMIR *and embraced.*

VLADIMIR

Ilya, thou holy peasant we greet thee!
Ilya, thou valiant Cossack, all hail!
Peasant and humble warrior, no longer,
But, knighted by our earthly hand,
Henceforth to us and all our court
Ilya, of Murom, shalt thou be!

[VLADIMIR *removes* ILYA'S *faded blue robe and throws a white and gold cloak about his shoulders. Suddenly a bright light appears where the wayfarers have grouped themselves far upon the hillside. The holy men are seen divested of their coarse brown cloaks, all clothed in white and shining raiment with halos about their heads. At this transformation even the nobles bow low.*

THE WAYFARERS (*singing*)

Praise ye the Lord.
Sing unto the Lord a new song.
Praise ye Him all His angels: praise ye Him all His hosts.
Praise ye Him sun and moon: praise ye Him all ye stars of light.

THE METROPOLITAN (*singing*)

For He covereth the heaven with clouds
And He prepareth rain for the earth.
He maketh the trees to flourish upon the mountains;
And He causeth peace to dwell within thy borders.

THE ENTIRE COMPANY (*singing*)

He causeth the wind to blow and the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herbs for the service of man that He may bring forth food upon the earth.
He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills;
He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy!

THE WAYFARERS (*singing*)

Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet
Praise Him with psaltery and with harp!

THE METROPOLITAN (*singing*)

Praise Him with timbrel and with dance;
Praise Him with stringéd instruments and organs!

THE ENTIRE COMPANY (*singing*)

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!

FIRST WAYFARER (*singing*)

In the name of the Father!

SECOND WAYFARER (*singing*)

And of the Son!

THIRD WAYFARER (*singing*)

And of the Holy Spirit!

THE METROPOLITAN (*singing*)

Through Ages of Ages;
From everlasting to everlasting:

THE ENTIRE COMPANY (*singing*)

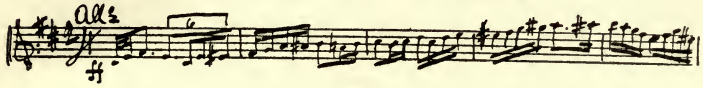
AMEN

[ILYA *with outstretched arms and a look of ecstacy climbs toward the shining figures, followed by the court. A blaze of light illumines the forest.*

SYNOPSIS OF THE MUSIC

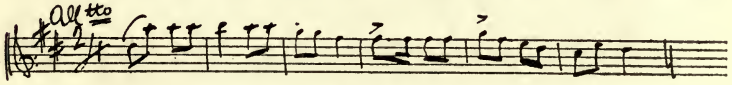
In writing the music for the Bohemian Grove Play of 1920, I have endeavored to avoid any systematic arrangement of a series of songs and choruses. It was rather my intention to write a free, unhampered flow of melody incidental to the story, and serving as a musical background, as it were, thus forming a part of the entire atmosphere of the performance.

The Prelude begins with a virile passage (No. 1), inter-

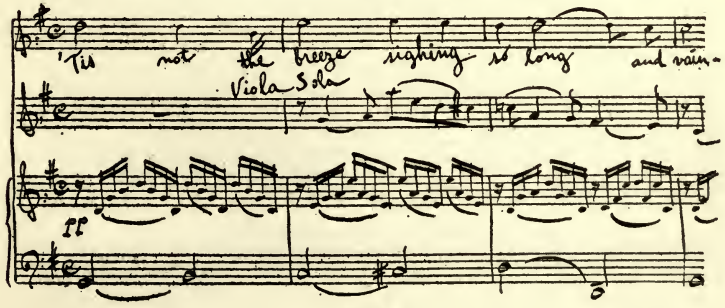


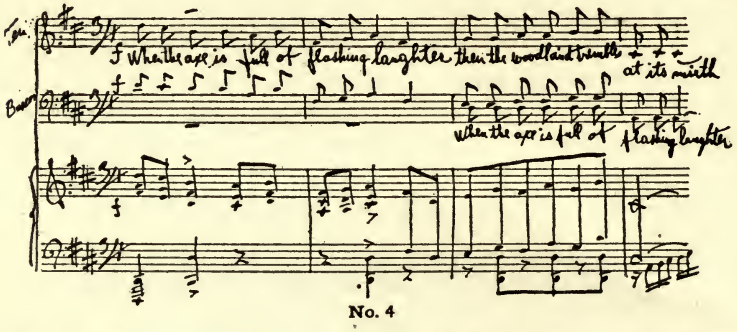
No. 1

preted by the violas, cellos, and basses and written in fugue form, creating the impression that something of great dramatic importance is about to happen. In the Divertissement of the Fugue, Theme No. 2, which consists of a

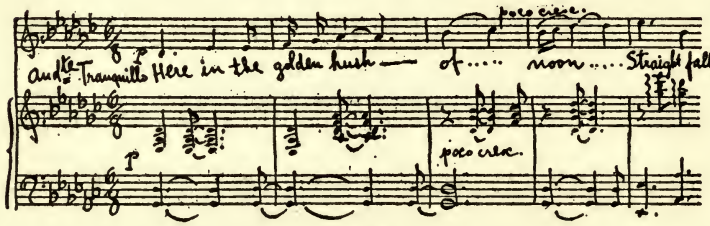


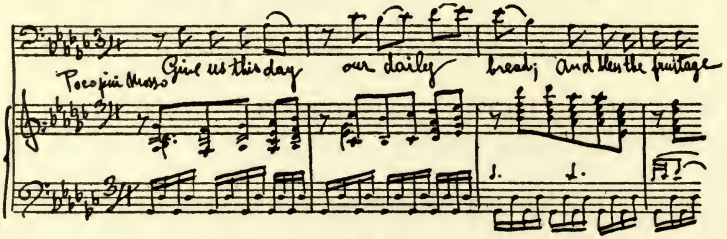
No. 2

Russian Dance, is introduced, and after the Stretta of the Fugue the Lament of Ilya (No. 3), sung behind the scenes,

No. 3

is heard. Following the Lament choruses of the peasants come from the distance introducing in fragmentary form

No. 4

themes Nos. 4 and 2, gradually fading away until they become merged with the first scene of the play.

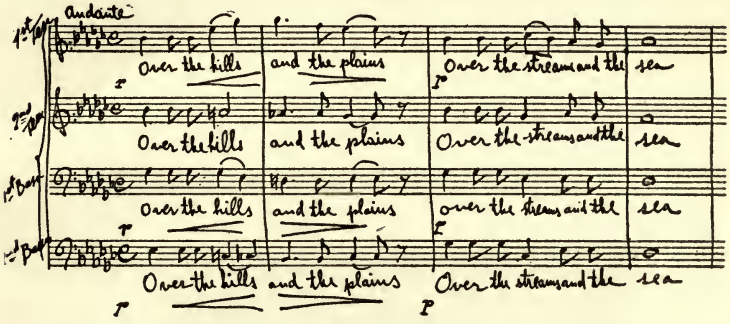
Theme No. 5 is the Song of the Peasants written in 6/8

No. 5

time, the second part (No. 6) is written in 3/4 time and

No. 6

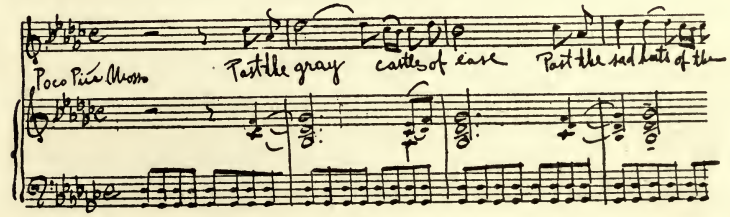
after the first eight measures sung by the basses these two themes are combined being rendered simultaneously.

The Chorus of the Axes consists of the development of Themes Nos. 2 and 4 which were already heard in the Prelude. This chorus is a grand ensemble number of chorus, orchestra and ballet. The finale of this number is a brilliant development of Theme No. 2.

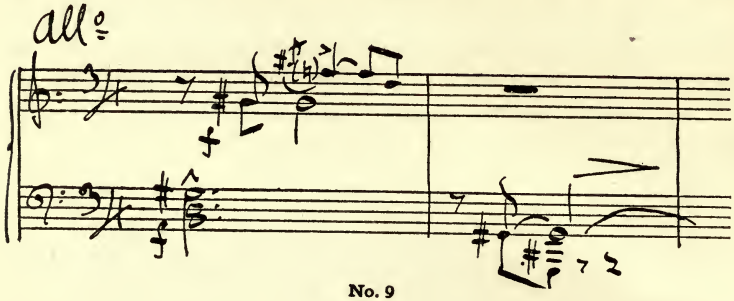
Theme No. 7 is the Chorus of the Wayfarers and it be-

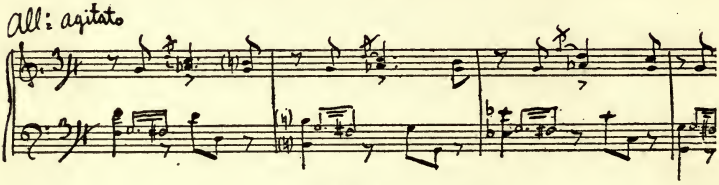


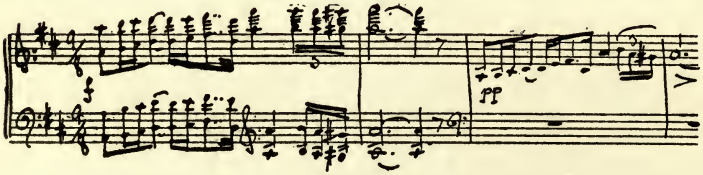
No. 7

gins with a four-part chorus followed by a tenor solo consisting of a Russian melody (No. 8); the chorus is after-

No. 8

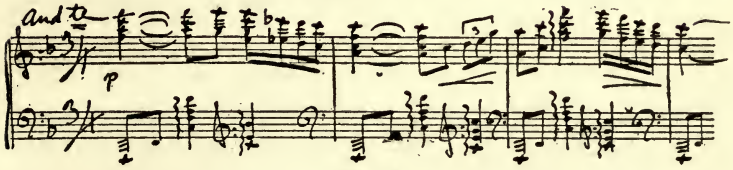
ward repeated with orchestral accompaniment in a more elaborate form.

Immediately after the Interlude between the first and second acts the Nightingale Theme (No. 9), is introduced,

No. 9

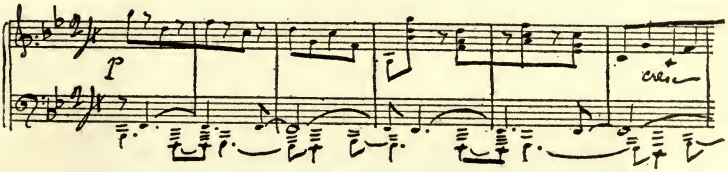
and following an intensely dramatic climax the Dance of the Bird Demons (No. 10) begins.

No. 10

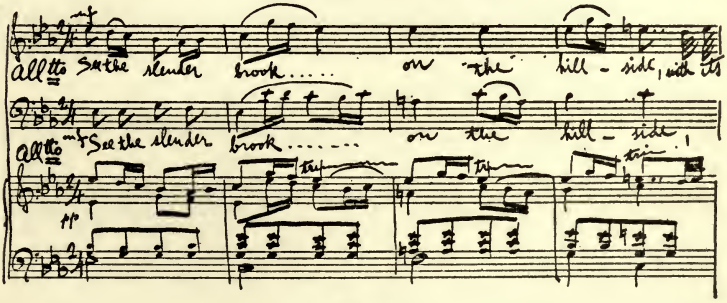
Theme No. 11 portrays Ilya after his miraculous change

No. 11

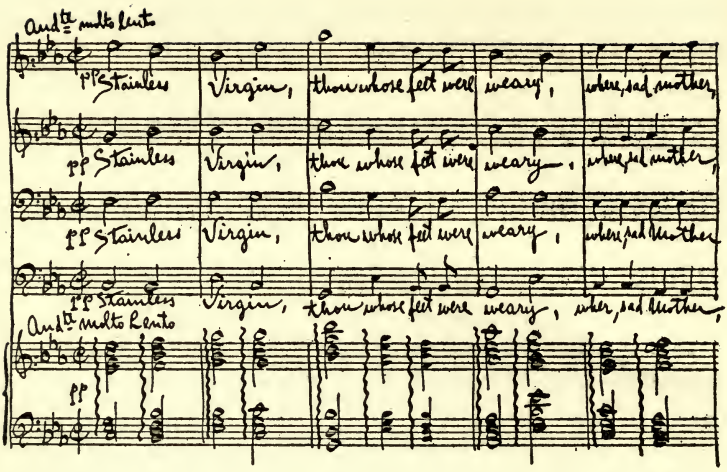
from a cripple to a strong, vigorous youth, and it is therefore an entirely different theme from No. 3, the Lament, which depicts Ilya in his crippled state. Henceforth the

new theme is used as a leading motive to describe each mood of Ilya during the rest of the action.

No. 12

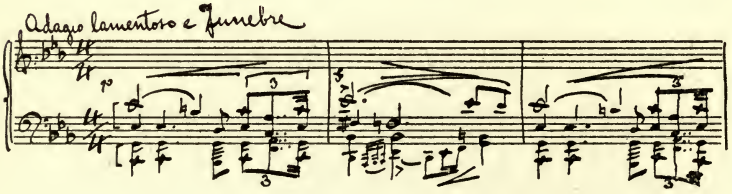
Theme No. 12 pictures the Love of Zlatigorka.

The Prelude to the third act is built around a theme of chimes (No. 13) heard from various directions, and a

No. 13

joyful chorus of peasants on the way to church (No. 14)

No. 14

is introduced. From the church comes a sacred chorus with organ accompaniment (No. 15) which is written

No. 15

according to the Gregorian school of composition. After this sacred chorus Theme No. 13 brings this Prelude to a thrilling close. This Prelude is an elaboration of the second sketch of the Water Colors Suite.

The introduction of the Funeral March (No. 16) is

No. 16

played by the cellos as a solo, describing the despair and anguish of Ilya after slaying his son.

The Finale is architecturally constructed from the daintiest pianissimo of the basses to the most powerful and imposing climax in which orchestra, chorus, organ and soloists combine, and this Finale is developed from the Theme of the Wayfarers (No. 7). The work is scored for two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons and double bassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, harp, celesta, glockenspiel, tympani, percussion, strings and organ.*

ULDERICO MARCELLI.

NOTE. This organ is now being introduced for the first time in the history of Grove Plays.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

YC 16766